

INTERNET COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION

(PCT Rule 61.2)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

United States Patent and Trademark
Office
(Box PCT)
Crystal Plaza 2
Washington, DC 20231
ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE

in its capacity as elected Office

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 31 May 1999 (31.05.99)	Applicant's or agent's file reference PP/2268
International application No. PCT/GB98/03091	Priority date (day/month/year) 13 October 1997 (13.10.97)
International filing date (day/month/year) 13 October 1998 (13.10.98)	
Applicant BARLOW, Eric et al	

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

☒ in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:

03 April 1999 (03.04.99)

☐ in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:

2. The election ☒ was

☐ was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

<p>The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland</p> <p>Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35</p>	<p>Authorized officer C. Carrié</p> <p>Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38</p>
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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

WO 99/19086
PCT/GB98/03091

30 APR 1999

NOTICE INFORMING THE APPLICANT OF THE COMMUNICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION TO THE DESIGNATED OFFICES

(PCT Rule 47.1(c), first sentence)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

PENNANT, Pyers
Stevens Hewlett & Perkins
1 Serjeants' Inn
Fleet Street
London
Greater London EC4Y 1LL
ROYAUME-UNI

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 22 April 1999 (22.04.99)		IMPORTANT NOTICE	
Applicant's or agent's file reference PP/2268			
International application No. PCT/GB98/03091	International filing date (day/month/year) 13 October 1998 (13.10.98)	Priority date (day/month/year) 13 October 1997 (13.10.97)	
Applicant ALCAN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED et al			

1. Notice is hereby given that the International Bureau has communicated, as provided in Article 20, the international application to the following designated Offices on the date indicated above as the date of mailing of this Notice:
AU, BR, CN, EP, IL, JP, KP, KR, US

In accordance with Rule 47.1(c), third sentence, those Offices will accept the present Notice as conclusive evidence that the communication of the international application has duly taken place on the date of mailing indicated above and no copy of the international application is required to be furnished by the applicant to the designated Office(s).

2. The following designated Offices have waived the requirement for such a communication at this time:
AL, AM, AP, AT, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BY, CA, CH, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EA, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IS, KE, KG, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, OA, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZW
The communication will be made to those Offices only upon their request. Furthermore, those Offices do not require the applicant to furnish a copy of the international application (Rule 49.1(a-bis)).

3. Enclosed with this Notice is a copy of the international application as published by the International Bureau on 22 April 1999 (22.04.99) under No. WO 99/19086

REMINDER REGARDING CHAPTER II (Article 31(2)(a) and Rule 54.2)

If the applicant wishes to postpone entry into the national phase until 30 months (or later in some Offices) from the priority date, a demand for international preliminary examination must be filed with the competent International Preliminary Examining Authority before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date.

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to monitor the 19-month time limit.

Note that only an applicant who is a national or resident of a PCT Contracting State which is bound by Chapter II has the right to file a demand for international preliminary examination.

REMINDER REGARDING ENTRY INTO THE NATIONAL PHASE (Article 22 or 39(1))

If the applicant wishes to proceed with the international application in the national phase, he must, within 20 months or 30 months, or later in some Offices, perform the acts referred to therein before each designated or elected Office.

For further important information on the time limits and acts to be performed for entering the national phase, see the Annex to Form PCT/IB/301 (Notification of Receipt of Record Copy) and Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No. (41-22) 740.14.35	Authorized officer J. Zahra Telephone No. (41-22) 338.83.38
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Continuation of Form PCT/IB/308

NOTICE INFORMING THE APPLICANT OF THE COMMUNICATION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION TO THE DESIGNATED OFFICES

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 22 April 1999 (22.04.99)	IMPORTANT NOTICE
Applicant's or agent's file reference PP/2268	International application No. PCT/GB98/03091
<p>The applicant is hereby notified that, at the time of establishment of this Notice, the time limit under Rule 46.1 for making amendments under Article 19 has not yet expired and the International Bureau had received neither such amendments nor a declaration that the applicant does not wish to make amendments.</p>	

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference PP/2268	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/GB98/03091	International filing date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 13/10/1998	Priority date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 13/10/1997
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC B05D7/14		
Applicant ALCAN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED et al.		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 7 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 3 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

I ☒ Basis of the report

II ☐ Priority

III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability



IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention

V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

VI ☐ Certain documents cited

VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application

VIII ☒ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 03/04/1999	Date of completion of this report 02.02.00
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer Thanos, I Telephone No. +49 89 2399 8462 <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/GB98/03091

I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of (*substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.*):

Description, pages:

1-20 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-21 as received on 05/11/1999 with letter of 02/11/1999

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages:
☐ the claims, Nos.:
☐ the drawings, sheets:

3. ☒ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

see separate sheet

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes:	Claims 5,11,16-21
	No:	Claims 1-4,6-10,12-15
Inventive step (IS)	Yes:	Claims
	No:	Claims 1-21
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes:	Claims 1-21
	No:	Claims

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/GB98/03091

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

see separate sheet

Concerning Section I, point 3:

The modification of the disclaimers introduced in claims 1 and 15 to "provided that adhesion promoters based on silicon-organic compounds are excluded" finds no support in the original application documents. It is also not based on the disclosure of any prior art document to avoid accidental overlap of subject-matters, but in an attempt to justify both novelty and inventive step for the non-disclaimed, yet generically claimed subject-matters in these claims.

Concerning Section V:

1. Citations:

D1 = US-A-3,935,349

D2 = US-A-5,439,747

D3 = EP-A-426 328

D4 = US-A-5,139,601

D5 = US-A-4,897,231

D6 = US-A-4,889,718

D7 = FR-A-2 252 421

Explanations:

2. The proviso "excluding silanes" in independent claims 1 and 15 of the application does not exclude (even formally) all the Si-based adhesion promoters suggested in document D1; the aminoalkylsilanols envisaged at column 5, lines 18-22 of D1 are not chemically classified as silanes.

2.1 Considering silanols as appropriate substitutes for the silanes explicitly disclosed in various text passages in D1, this document explicitly discloses all technical features covered by the subject-matters of claims 1-3, 6-9 and 13 (since the intended use specified in this claim is not-limitative for the aluminium workpiece itself; all that, for instance, is required is that said workpiece is suitable for automotive use); Art. 33(2), PCT. D1 describes pretreated aluminium, in particular

anodised aluminium workpieces onto which a Si-based adhesion promoter is applied (cf. point 2 above); any known paint is foreseen to overcoat the pretreated workpiece (cf. D1, column 2, lines 35-66, c. 4, l. 41 to c. 5, l. 22, c. 5, l. 30-39, c. 5, l. 63 to c. 60, l. 60 and c. 8, l. 42-52 as well as examples 1 and 5). The aluminium oxide surface density of 4 mg/dm² specified in example 1 (D1, column 11) corresponds to an embodiment anticipating (after recalculation of the amount of oxide in layer thickness) also the subject-matter of claim 4; Art. 33(2), PCT. The novelty of the method claims 15-21 vis-à-vis the teaching of document D1 is formally established by the requirement of initially (i.e. prior to anodisation) precleaning the aluminium surface. This feature is however considered obvious and trivial and is known from at least document D7 (cf. Example 1, lines 35-40). Furthermore, since D7 generally teaches techniques of improving corrosion resistance of an aluminium workpiece by forming only a thin anodic coating, overcoated by an appropriate resin (exhibiting the implicit characteristic of being a material on which an additional material can adhere), the method of its fabrication is novelty destroying for the subject-matter of claim 15 (cf. also D7, page 2, l. 9-12, p. 4, l. 11-25, p. 6, l. 15-25, p. 7, l. 12-30 and in respect of useful alternative polymeric coating materials, Table 4, p. 23; explanatory observations concerning improved polymeric adherence are given at page 34, l. 27-37).

- 2.2 The "painted" aluminium workpieces obtainable as described in D1 exhibit improved paint adherence and corrosion resistance. The first of these goals corresponds to the scope of the present invention; thus the subject-matters of the claims referred to under item 2.1 (in part in combination with the cleaning step proposed in D7) do not also meet the requirements of inventive step (Art. 33(3), PCT).
- 2.3 Alternatively, document D3 describes coated metallic articles (among other anodised aluminium) previously subjected to a chromate conversion treatment (evidently giving rise to the deposition of some form of chromium; in particular as chromate), followed by resin coating and subsequent cationic electrodeposition of a paint (cf. D3, p. 2, l. 23-26, p. 3, l. 17-21, p. 4, l. 37-42 and p. 4, l. 47 to p. 5, l. 15; conditions for cationic electrodeposition of a paint are described at p. 6, l. 9-12). Thus D3 is novelty destroying for the subject-matter of claims 1-3, 7-9 12, 13 and 14.

- 2.4 From D6 aluminium workpieces are known comprising an anodic oxide coating, a polyacid as adhesion promoter and an elastomeric (polyurethane) topcoat, considered to be a lacquer (cf. D6, c. 1, l. 10-34, c. 3, l. 45 to c. 4, l. 4, Example 1 at c. 4 and c. 6, l. 1-37). This document is also novelty destroying and impairs inventive step for a plurality of embodiments covered by the variously claimed subject-matter of the present application.
- 2.5 In respect of unpainted, polymer-coated anodised aluminium, novelty destroying (but also in with regard to inventive step relevant) subject-matters are disclosed also in documents D2, D4 and D5:
- D2: c. 1, l. 27-42, c. 3, l. 22-33, c. 4, l. 43-45
 - D4: c. 2, l. 22 to c. 3, l. 13
 - D5: c. 1, l. 1-16 and 30-65, c. 2, l. 31-40.
- 2.6 The specific mass/unit area of promoter (claims 5, 11) and potential post-treatment of an adhesive-promoter-coated article according to claims 16-21 are considered to be routine-type technical features for the person skilled in the art, not appropriate to justify an inventive step (Art. 33(3), PCT).
- 2.6 The Applicant's remarks put forward in an intermediate letter, that the coatings formed on anodised aluminium as described in D3 and D5, should not be interpreted as adhesion promoters are considered to be subjective in nature. The said coatings are described in documents D3 and D5 in conjunction with the provision of some kind of outer surface exhibiting improved capability of adhesion to other materials; thus they may be interpreted as "adhesion promoters" in general terms.

Concerning Section VIII:

- The meanings of expressions "no-rinse coating" and "conversion coating" are not clarified in the claims (cf. claim 17).
- Assuming that the term "inorganic" as used in claim 12 refers to purely inorganic adhesion promoters, there is not technical support for such subject-matter in the

description. In the description, the invention is exemplified exclusively in terms of commercial adhesion promoters, identified by trade names without indicating the basic components thereof; furthermore all mentioned promoter compositions are said to comprise an organic polymeric material and possibly a further inorganic element (e.g. Ti, Zr..).

CLAIMS

1. An aluminium workpiece having on a surface thereof an
5 anodic oxide film and a coating which consists essentially of at least one
adhesion promoter, providing that promoters based on silicon-organic
compounds are excluded.
2. The aluminium workpiece of claim 1, wherein there is a paint,
10 lacquer, varnish or enamel layer overlying the adhesion promoter coating.
3. The aluminium workpiece of claim 2, which is aluminium
sheet of which at least one surface has the anodic oxide film, the adhesion
promoter coating and the paint, lacquer, varnish or enamel layer.
15
4. The aluminium workpiece of claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the
anodic oxide film is 50 – 200 nm thick.
5. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein
20 the adhesion promoter coating is present at a weight of 5 – 500 mg/m².
6. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 2 to 5, which is
painted sheet for architectural use.
- 25 7. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 2 to 6, wherein
the adhesion promoter is selected from at least one of polyacrylic acid,
poly(hydroxyphenyl) styrene and pretreatments comprising one or more of
Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr and F.
- 30 8. The aluminium workpiece of claim 1, wherein the adhesion
promoter is one containing one or more of Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti and Zr.

AMENDED SHEET

9. The aluminium workpiece of claim 8, which is aluminium sheet of which at least one surface has the anodic oxide film, the adhesion promoter and a paint layer or an adhesive overlying the adhesion promoter.
- 5 10. The aluminium workpiece of claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the anodic oxide film is 10 – 50 nm thick.
11. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 8 to 10, wherein the adhesion promoter coating is present at a weight of
10 2 – 100 mg/m².
12. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 8 to 11, wherein the Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr and F of the adhesion promoter are inorganic.
15
13. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 8 to 12, which is primed sheet for automotive use.
14. The aluminium workpiece of claim 9, wherein the paint layer
20 is of an electro-conductive paint primer.
15. A method of treating an aluminium workpiece, which method comprises precleaning a surface of the workpiece, anodising the workpiece so as to form an anodic oxide film on the surface and applying to the
25 anodic oxide film a coating consisting essentially of at least one adhesion promoter, provided that adhesion promoters based on silicon-organic compounds are excluded.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein there is applied over the
30 adhesion promoter coating a paint, lacquer, varnish or enamel layer.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the adhesion promoter is applied as a no-rinse coating or a conversion coating.

18. The method of claim 16 or claim 17, wherein the aluminium
5 workpiece is aluminium sheet.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the precleaned surface of the sheet is continuously anodised to form an anodic oxide film on the surface.

10

20. The method of any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein the adhesion promoter is one containing one or more of Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr and F.

15 21. The method of claim 20, wherein a paint layer or adhesive is applied over the adhesion promoter coating.

AMENDED SHEET



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : B05D 7/14, 3/10, 7/00, C25D 11/18	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 99/19086 (43) International Publication Date: 22 April 1999 (22.04.99)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB98/03091 (22) International Filing Date: 13 October 1998 (13.10.98) (30) Priority Data: 9721650.1 ✓ 13 October 1997 (13.10.97) GB (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): ALCAN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED [CA/CA]; 1188 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Québec H3A 3G2 (CA). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): BARLOW, Eric [GB/GB]; 1 Deers Close, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4EA (GB). FOSTER, Mark [GB/GB]; 13 Blenheim Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9TQ (GB). PARGETER, Chris [GB/GB]; 27 Beaulieu Close, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 8FG (GB). LIMBACH, Peter, Karl, Ferdinand [DE/DE]; Zum Hohen Brunnen 21, D-37075 Göttingen (DE). (74) Agents: PENNANT, Pyers et al.; Stevens Hewlett & Perkins, 1 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, London, Greater London EC4Y 1LL (GB).		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>
(54) Title: COATED ALUMINIUM WORKPIECE (57) Abstract Aluminium alloy sheet having on a surface an anodic oxide film and an overlying coating consisting essentially of at least one adhesion promoter excluding silanes. Sheet for architectural use carries a paint layer over the adhesion promoter coating. Sheet for automobile use may carry an electroconductive paint primer layer over the adhesion promoter coating. Preferred adhesion promoters are polyacrylic acid and pretreatments containing Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr and F values.		

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COATED ALUMINIUM WORKPIECE

- 5 There is a large market in painted aluminium sheet, both for architectural use and for automotive use. There is also a large market for lacquered aluminium sheet for canstock use. In all these applications, the adhesion of the organic coating (typically paint, lacquer or adhesive) to the aluminium metal may not be adequate. Various surface pretreatments
- 10 have been proposed and are widely used to improve such adhesion:
- An anodic oxide film is formed on the aluminium surface. Particularly when anodising is done in a phosphoric acid based electrolyte, the outer surface of the anodic oxide film may be extremely rough, including filaments or whiskers, such as to provide an excellent mechanical
 - 15 key for subsequently applied organic coatings.
 - Adhesion promoters are a class of materials that have been used to improve the adhesion of organic coatings to an underlying metal substrate. One example is polyacrylic acid. A chromium-fluoride-phosphate pretreatment has been successfully marketed under the
 - 20 tradename Accomet C. Other similar treatments contain fluoride values and other transition metals. Such pretreatments may act as adhesion promoters and also provide corrosion resistance.

 Adhesion promoters have in general been applied to bare metal. This invention is based on the idea that additional advantages may

25 be obtained if such adhesion promoters are applied to an aluminium metal surface which is not bare.

 Thus the invention provides an aluminium workpiece having on a surface thereof an anodic oxide film and a coating which consists essentially of at least one adhesion promoter excluding silanes.

30 A workpiece is an object of indeterminate size and shape. While the invention may have application in connection with extrusions and

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other workpieces, it is of principal interest in connection with aluminium sheet, either continuous sheet in the form of coil, or cut sheet which is either flat or has been formed into shaped components e.g. for architectural or automotive or canstock use. Depending on the intended application,
5 either one surface or both surfaces of the sheet may have the artificially applied aluminium oxide or hydroxide film and the coating.

The term aluminium is here used to include both the pure metal and alloys in which Al is a major component. Preferred are alloys of the 2000, 3000, 5000 and 6000 series of the Aluminum Association Inc
10 Register.

Preferably the oxide film is an anodic oxide film, e.g. formed by anodising the metal workpiece in an acidic electrolyte. Preferred electrolytes are sulphuric acid, and particularly phosphorus oxyacids including phosphoric acid. Anodising conditions may be chosen, in
15 accordance with criteria well known in the field, to generate an anodic oxide film having a rough outer surface. The artificially applied aluminium oxide or hydroxide film needs to be thick enough to provide abrasion and corrosion resistance; but not so thick as to have a tendency to spall or crack when a workpiece carrying the film is formed to shape; and, in a
20 preferred aspect of the invention discussed below, not so thick as to make the coating so electrically resistant that spot-welding is impossible. Preferred thicknesses are in the range 10 – 200 nm particularly 15 - 150 nm, more especially 15 – 50 nm.

Adhesion promoters are known and employed to enhance
25 adhesive bond strength, or more commonly to enhance the environmental resistance of the substrate surface/adhesive interface to attack by moisture. Adhesion promoters were described by P E Cassidy *et al* in Ind. Eng. Chem. Prod. Res. Development Volume 11, No 2 (1972) pages 170-7; and by A J Kinlock in J Mat. Sci., 15(1980), pages 2141-66 at page
30 2159. Commercial pretreatments (adhesion promoters) include Alodine NR1453., Alodine NR2010, zirconia/polyacrylic acid, Accomet C

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and Safeguard 6000 which contain Ti, Zr, Cr, Mn, Si, F, polyacrylic acid and substituted styrenes.

An adhesion promoter may be a pretreatment comprising one or more of Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr values. These values are preferably
5 inorganic, in the sense that they do not contain metal-carbon (or Si-C) bonds, although they may be used in conjunction with organic polymers. The adhesion promoter may also comprise fluoride values or another acid value. They may conveniently be provided by dissolving fluorozirconic acid H_2ZrF_6 , or a soluble fluorozirconate salt, in water; alternatively, a
10 corresponding acid or salt of Cr, Mn, Mo, Si or Ti may be used. Cr is preferably absent on account of its toxicity and effluent problems. Fluorozirconate (or other fluoro complex) is preferably present at a concentration of 0.1 – 200 g/l, particularly from 10 – 100 g/l, of a formulation for application to an aluminium workpiece.

15 In the case of Cr and Mn, there is probably some dissolution of an anodic oxide film and reduction by Al of the Cr or Mn from a higher to a lower oxidation state. In the case of formulations based on Ti or Zr there are no oxidation states to change. It is thought that the hydrofluoric acid may attack the anodic oxide film causing a local pH change resulting in the
20 formation of a pretreatment/ Al_2O_3 gel followed by further pretreatment deposition. These pretreatments may be applied in the form of no-rinse solutions.

These pretreatment formulations based on fluoride and transition metals may also contain an organic polymer such as polyacrylic
25 acid or polyvinylpyrrolidone. Whether or not such polymer is present, the pretreatment coating is preferably provided at a coat weight of 2 - 500 mg/m^2 , e.g. 5 – 100 mg/m^2 , particularly 10 – 60 mg/m^2 .

Other possible adhesion promoters include siloxanes, polyvinylphenols, polyacrylic acids and salts and esters thereof, and
30 polyacrylic acid/zirconia mixtures. These adhesion promoters are preferably present at a coat weight of 5 – 500 mg/m^2 preferably

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10 - 500 mg/m². While adhesion promoters are effective to improve surface properties of the aluminium workpieces of this invention, it is surprisingly found that lower concentrations are sometimes more effective than higher concentrations.

5 In another aspect the invention provides a method of treating an aluminium workpiece, which method comprises precleaning a surface of the workpiece, anodising the workpiece so as to form an anodic oxide film on the surface, applying to the anodic oxide film a coating of an adhesion promoter excluding silanes and preferably applying to the adhesion
10 promoter coating an organic layer. Anodising may be effected in less than 60s e.g. less than 10s, and is preferably performed continuously. The adhesion promoter is preferably applied, either as a no-rinse coating, e.g. a composition consisting essentially of the adhesion promoter in a volatile vehicle which evaporates from the surface of the workpiece leaving a film
15 of the adhesion promoter without the need for rinsing. Or a conversion coating composition may be used which reacts chemically with the substrate, e.g. the artificial oxide layer, to form a film of the adhesion promoter which is not removed by rinsing.

 In one embodiment, a porous anodic oxide film is formed of
20 thickness preferably 50 – 200 nm. When polyacrylic acid or other adhesion promoter is applied on top of the porous film, it generally fills the pores and forms a continuous layer on top of them. This embodiment has surprisingly good corrosion resistance and is particularly suitable as painted sheet for architectural use.

25 In another embodiment, a barrier layer anodic oxide film is formed of thickness preferably 20 – 50 nm. A pretreatment e.g. NR1453 (adhesive promoter) is applied over this; the anodic film is sometimes found to be thinner after application of the pretreatment but never disappears altogether. A paint film, e.g. a conductive paint primer may be
30 applied over the pretreatment, which primer film may be thin so as to permit electro-welding. Sheet according to this embodiment may have

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surprisingly good forming characteristics and is particularly suitable for automotive use where components formed from the sheet are adhesively bonded to other components. Components formed from the sheet, and structures made by adhesively joining the components, can be painted on an electrophoretic or electrostatic paint line. Primed aluminium sheet is widely sold for automotive use, where the presence of the primer gives the sheet improved forming properties.

The aluminium sheet or other workpiece according to this invention carries on its surface a composite coating consisting of an anodic aluminium oxide film and a coating consisting of an adhesion promoter overlying the film or occupying pores adjacent the outer surface of the film. This composite coating is found to improve adhesion to the workpiece of an applied organic coating such as a paint, lacquer, varnish, enamel or adhesive. In another aspect, the invention provides such an aluminium workpiece where paint, lacquer, varnish, enamel or adhesive is present overlying the artificially applied aluminium oxide or hydroxide film and the adhesion promoter coating.

EXAMPLE 1

Sheets of AA6016, 1.2 mm thick, and AA5182, 1.15 mm thick, were electrolytically cleaned in 200 g/l phosphoric acid at 90°C for 3 seconds at 3 kA/m². Half of the sheets were anodised in phosphoric acid to produce a film typically 15 – 50 nm thick. Treatment conditions were:

Phosphoric acid 200 g/l
Temp 65°C
Time 0.5 secs
Spray rinse in 30–50 g/l phosphoric acid then deionised water
Dry 120°C for 2 mins.

After rinsing and drying, the bare and anodised sheets were coated with a Ti containing no-rinse pretreatment Alodine NR 1453 to give a coating weight 5 – 15 mg/m² expressed as the weight of Ti. Alodine

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NR1453 contains F, Zr and Ti, and has in addition a polymer present (a poly(hydroxyphenyl) styrene derivative).

Comparison samples were prepared by applying a Cr containing no-rinse treatment, Accomet C, at conventional levels.

5 After drying the sheets were coated on one side with electro conducting epoxy based paint Bonazinc 2004, (containing Al pigment) or Bonazinc 2000 (containing Al/Zn pigments). Coating thickness was about 7 ± 2 microns.

10 Formability Tests

Formability was measured by means of an Erichsen dome test BS 3855 arranged so that the paint film on the convex side of the dome was extended 20% in biaxial tension. This corresponds to a bulge height of 8 mm. The coating area deformed by the dome was cross hatched. The punch side of the sheet was lubricated. Adhesion in the domed area was measured by means of BS 3900 Part 2 test using a sticky tape. Scoring was as per the BS 3900 Part 2 test in which the best result is 0 and the worst is 5.

The results are presented in Table 1 from which it can be seen that:

1. In the absence of an anodised film the NR1453 was inferior to Accomet C. Performance generally improved as the coating weight decreased.
2. In the presence of an anodised film the NR1453 gave results comparable to or better than Accomet C.

Adhesive Bonding Tests

Sheets prepared as described above were adhesively bonded and tested in T-Peel. 25 mm wide strips were overlapped and adhesively bonded with an epoxy adhesive XD4600, the coated side being towards the adhesive. The overlapped joint was then peeled apart at a cross head

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movement rate of 20 mm/min.

On initial application of the peel load, the load rises to a peak and then drops to a constant level as the joints begins to separate. The constant load is measured and must exceed 7N/mm of width of joint and
5 the failure mechanism be cohesive in the adhesive.

All of the NR 1453 equalled or exceeded 7N/mm when applied to pretreated anodic film, and all failed by cohesive failure within the adhesive.

Table 1 – Automotive Primer Evaluation – Phase II

Alloy	Additional Treatment	Pretreatment	Erichsen (Gt) 8mm Dome
AA 6016	None	Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 5 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	2
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 10 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	4
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 15 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	4
		Accomet C	1
	Anodised	Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 5 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	1
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 10 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	1
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 15 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	2
		Accomet C	2
AA 5182	None	Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 5 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	2
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 10 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	3
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 15 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	5
		Accomet C	2
	Anodised	Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 5 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	1
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 10 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	0
		Alodine NR 1453 ($\approx 15 \text{ mg/m}^2$)	1
		Accomet C	1

EXAMPLE 2

The conditions of Example 1 were reproduced using a production line comprising an electrolytic etch, anodising to form a barrier layer about 20 nm thick, to which the pretreatment was applied by roller
5 coating at 60 m/min. Erichsen test bulges were made having a height of 8 mm. Results are summarised in Table 2.

On both alloys the presence of a barrier film under the pretreatment improved performance.

Table 2 – Primer Applications – Summary of Erichsen Dome Test Adhesion Performance*

Surface Cleaning	Pretreatment	Bonazinc 2000		Bonazinc 2004	
		AA6016	AA5182	AA6016	AA5182
Electrolytic etch	Alodine NR 1453	3	4	2	4
≈20 nm barrier layer (anodised)	None	3	3	2	3
	Alodine NR 1453	1	2	2	0

* BS 3900 Part 2 Erichsen Dome Height 8 mm

EXAMPLE 3

Samples of AA6016 T4 in the form of coils 1.2 mm thick were passed through an electrolytic cleaning and anodising section of a production line at a rate of 26 m/min. The line contained three baths each
 5 containing 200 g/l phosphoric acid with less than 5 g/l dissolved aluminium and operated under the following conditions.

	Temp °C			Charge Density kCm ⁻²		
Clean only	90	90	90	2	2	1
Clean and anodise	90	90	70	2	2	3.5

To the pretreated coils was applied an adhesion promoter
 10 Alodine NR1453 (Henkel, containing fluorotitanate, fluoro-zirconate and poly(hydroxyphenyl) styrene derivative) at a rate of about 10 mg/m².

To the resulting coils was applied a coating of an electroconducting epoxy-based paint primer Bonazinc 2004 (containing Al pigment) at a coating thickness of about 7 µm. Samples of primed sheet
 15 were subjected to formability tests and adhesive bonding tests as described in Example 1.

Samples that had been cleaned only gave an Erichsen dome test result of 2. Samples that had been cleaned and anodised gave an Erichsen dome test result of 0, a substantial improvement.

20 Samples that had been cleaned only and that had been cleaned and anodised were subjected to the T-peel test. All samples passed the test, for joint failure was in all cases in the adhesive rather than at any adhesive-metal interface.

This work was repeated with other pretreatments (adhesion
 25 promoters) as shown.

NR 2010 (Henkel, fluorotitanate) at about 5 mg/m².

NR 778 (Henkel, fluoro-zirconate) at about 10 mg/m².

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Ammonium zirconium carbonate / polyacrylic acid reaction product, at about 10 mg/m².

- Accomet C (Albright & Wilson, Cr and Si values).
- Safeguard 6000 (Sanchem, permanganate).
- 5 • PT2 (Alcan, Si values).

The Erichsen dome results (not reported in detail) for the cleaned-and-anodised samples were all satisfactory (3 or less), and all equal to or better than the cleaned-only samples. In T-peel tests, substantially all failures were clearly within the adhesive layer, indicating
10 that bonding was satisfactory.

EXAMPLE 4

Aluminium sheet intended for use as closure stock for cans was anodised in sulphuric acid on a commercial production line run at
15 90 m/min. Some of the anodised sheet was then treated with polyacrylic acid (MW 60000 PAA). Panels were then bar coated with two white polyester external enamels plus clear overprint varnishes using normal commercial practices. 60 mm deep drawn shells were produced from the lacquered panels lubricated with castor oil, again in accordance with
20 normal commercial practice. The following lacquer adhesion tests were performed.

Feathering Test

At the closure base a small cup was extended round the shell
25 circumference. The relative lacquer feathering characteristics for each experimental substrate were assessed by comparing with specimen standards, and ranked on a scale 0 to 4 with the highest value showing the worst coating adhesion.

Cross-hatch adhesion loss

At the closure base where the coating had received the most deformation, grid lines were scored through the lacquer into the panel using a metal scribe. Lacquer adhesion was assessed by firm application of adhesive tape on to the grid lines, followed by quick removal and the film percentage adhesion loss estimated and performance ranked on a scale 0 to 4.

Adhesion after Autoclaving

Closures were immersed in water held at 120°C for 30 mins in an autoclave, and the lacquer adhesion characteristics were assessed.

The results are set out in Table 3. It can there be seen that PAA improved the performance of the coating.

Table 3 - Lacquer Adhesion Characteristics

Substrate Identification	Lacquer Performance			
	Feathering Test	Cross-hatch Adhesion Loss	Adhesion after Autoclaving	Total Score
Without PAA	0	1	0.5	1.5
With PAA	0	0	0	0

EXAMPLE 5

Two alloys were used in this work, AA3005 which was 0.4 mm thick, and AA5754 which was 0.95 mm thick. Panels of each alloy were precleaned by treatment with phosphoric acid for 3 seconds at 90°C. They were then anodised in phosphoric acid at 65°C using a current of 3 A. In some cases the anodised surfaces were given further treatment with adhesion promoters:-

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Accomet C, a commercial no rinse treatment based on hexavalent chromium and containing fluoride and phosphate values; 1:1 by weight mixtures of zirconium oxide and polyacrylic acid;

5 Polyacrylic acid alone.

The pretreated specimens were then painted and exposed to acid salt spray according to DIN 50021-ESS. Results set out in Table 4 below are expressed on a scale of 0 to 5 where 0 is excellent, 1 and 2 are acceptable, 3 is borderline and 4 and 5 are unacceptable. The alloy here
10 was AA3005. Paint A was a single coat polyester. Paint B was a 2-coat polyester system.

Table 4

Paint	Anodised (secs)	Adhesion Promoter	Hours exposed to acetic acid salt spray			
			Panel & Scribe		Creep	
			336	1008	336	1008
A	2	-	4	X	1	X
A	2	Accomet C	1	2	1	1
A	2	Zr:PAA	3	4	4	5
A	2	PAA	1	2	1	5
B	2	-	4	X	1	X
B	2	Accomet C	1	2	1	3
B	2	Zr:PAA	2	3	1	1
B	2	PAA	1	2	1	5

15

X = Test discontinued

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Anodic film thicknesses were determined from TEM micrographs. The anodising parameters used and the resulting pretreatment thicknesses are summarised in Table 5 below.

5

Table 5

Anodising Parameters		Anodic Film Thickness		Additional Pretreatment	
Temp. (°C)	Time (Secs)	(nm)		Adhesion Promoter	Thickness (nm)
		Barrier	Total		
65	2	40	80	None	None
		35	80	Accomet C	25
		40	80	1:1 Zr:PAA	40
		40	100	PAA	-

EXAMPLE 6

- 10 Panels of the same alloys as used in Example 5 were precleaned and then anodised for 3 seconds in phosphoric acid at 65°C using an anodising current of 3 A. The anodising process time was varied to produce either a 30 nm barrier layer or a 100 nm fully filamented anodic film. Some anodised panels were additionally treated with polyacrylic acid
- 15 (PAA) or Henkel poly(hydroxyphenyl) styrene derivative (PHS) solutions at two different spin coating concentrations. The treated panels were painted with a base coat and a clear coat, cured, and exposed to acetic acid salt spray tests (DIN 50021). The experiments are summarised in the following Table 6 and the results given in Table 7. The findings can be summarised:-
- 20 1. Phosphoric acid anodised pretreatments gave poor acetic acid salt spray test irrespective of anodic film structure.
2. The acetic acid salt spray test performance of the phosphoric acid anodised pretreatment was significantly improved by subsequent

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treatment with PAA or PHS solutions. A 2% PAA spin coated application produced the best overall performance and without any failures.

Table 6

5

Expt	ALLOY	ANODISING PARAMETERS			ADDITIONAL PRETREATMENT	Spin Coating % Conc.
		Amps	Temp. (°C)	Time (secs)		
1	AA3005	3	65	1.5	None	
2				3		
3				3	PAA	0.5
4						2
5					PHS	0.5
6						2
7	AA5754	3	65	1.5	None	
8				3		
9				3	PAA	0.5
10						2
11					PHS	0.5
12						2

Table 7

Hours exposed to acetic acid salt spray (DIN 50021)									
Expt.	Panel & Scribe			Bend			Creep		
	336	504	1008	336	504	1008	336	504	1008
1	4	4	5	5	5	5	1	1	5
2	4	4	5	2	2	5	1	1	5
3	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
4	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
5	1	1	2	1	3	3	1	1	1
6	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
7	4	4	5	2	2	5	1	1	5
8	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	5
9	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	3
12	1	1	1	1	2	4	1	1	3

EXAMPLE 7

Panels of AA5754 H42 0.76 mm thick were electrolytically cleaned in phosphoric acid for 3 seconds at 90°C and were then (in some cases) anodised under various conditions as shown in Table 8 below. The treated panels were spin coated with an adhesion promoter as indicated:-

- Accomet C (Albright & Wilson, Cr and Si values)
- PAA (polyacrylic acid)
- 10 PSSA Polystyrene sulphonic acid-co-maleic acid
- PHS Henkel, poly(hydroxyphenyl)-styrene derivative
- Alodine NR1453N (Henkel, Zr, Ti values plus PHS)

The coated panels were painted (Wulf PVDF-1 2923-40 + Becker PK 16-40) and exposed to acid salt spray according to

15 DIN 50021-ESS. Results are set out in Table 9 below.

Table 8

Anodising Parameters			Additional Treatment	Spin Coating Conc. %	Coat Weight (mg/m ²)	Test No.
Amps (kA)	Temp. (°C)	Time (Secs)				
3	65	3	Anodised only		None	1
			PAA Mol. wt 5K	2	163	2
				2	164	3
				5	245	4
				10	407	5
			PAA Mol. wt 250K	2	277	6
			PHS	0.5		7
				2		8
				5		9
			PSSA	1		10
			Accomet C	5		11
			Hydroxquinoline	1		12
ac sulphuric acid anodised			Anodised only		None	13
3	60	2	PAA Mol. wt 50K	2	176	14
				5	207	15

Table 9

Test No	Hours exposed to acetic acid salt spray (DIN50021)								
	Panel & Scribe			Bend			Creep		
	336	504	840	336	504	840	336	504	840
1	4	4	5	1	1	2	1	5	5
2	1	2	4	1	1	2	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
8	3	4	5	1	1	2	1	1	5
9	4	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	5
10	4	4	5	1	1	2	1	5	5
11	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
12	1	4	4	2	2	2	1	1	5
13	4	5	5	2	2	3	5	5	5
14	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
15	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

CLAIMS

- 5 1. An aluminium workpiece having on a surface thereof an anodic oxide film and a coating which consists essentially of at least one adhesion promoter excluding silanes.
2. The aluminium workpiece of claim 1, wherein there is a paint,
10 lacquer, varnish or enamel layer overlying the adhesion promoter coating.
3. The aluminium workpiece of claim 2, which is aluminium sheet of which at least one surface has the anodic oxide film, the adhesion promoter coating and the paint, lacquer, varnish or enamel layer.
- 15 4. The aluminium workpiece of claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the anodic oxide film is 50 – 200 nm thick.
5. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein
20 the adhesion promoter coating is present at a weight of 5 – 500 mg/m².
6. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 2 to 5, which is painted sheet for architectural use.
- 25 7. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 2 to 6, wherein the adhesion promoter is selected from at least one of polyacrylic acid, poly(hydroxyphenyl) styrene and pretreatments comprising one or more of Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr and F values.
- 30 8. The aluminium workpiece of claim 1, wherein the adhesion promoter is one containing one or more of Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti and Zr values.

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9. The aluminium workpiece of claim 8, which is aluminium sheet of which at least one surface has the anodic oxide film, the adhesion promoter and a paint layer or an adhesive overlying the adhesion promoter.
- 5 10. The aluminium workpiece of claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the anodic oxide film is 10 – 50 nm thick.
11. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 8 to 10, wherein the adhesion promoter coating is present at a weight of
10 2 – 100 mg/m².
12. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 8 to 11, wherein the Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr and F values of the adhesion promoter are inorganic.
- 15 13. The aluminium workpiece of any one of claims 8 to 12, which is primed sheet for automotive use.
14. The aluminium workpiece of claim 9, wherein the paint layer
20 is of an electro-conductive paint primer.
15. A method of treating an aluminium workpiece, which method comprises precleaning a surface of the workpiece, anodising the workpiece so as to form an anodic oxide film on the surface and applying to the
25 anodic oxide film a coating consisting essentially of at least one adhesion promoter excluding silanes.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein there is applied over the adhesion promoter coating a paint, lacquer, varnish or enamel layer.

30

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17. The method of claim 16, wherein the adhesion promoter is applied as a no-rinse coating or a conversion coating.

18. The method of claim 16 or claim 17, wherein the aluminium
5 workpiece is aluminium sheet.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the precleaned surface of the sheet is continuously anodised to form an anodic oxide film on the surface.

10

20. The method of any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein the adhesion promoter is one containing one or more of Cr, Mn, Mo, Si, Ti, Zr and F values.

15 21. The method of claim 20, wherein a paint layer or adhesive is applied over the adhesion promoter coating.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/GB 98/03091

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 6 B05D7/14 B05D3/10 B05D7/00 C25D11/18

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 B05D C25D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 3 935 349 A (TERAI SHIRO ET AL) 27 January 1976 see the whole document ---	1-3, 7-9, 15, 16, 18-21
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X	EP 0 426 328 A (SHINTO PAINT CO LTD) 8 May 1991 see page 4, line 37 - line 41; examples --- -/--	1-3, 7-9, 14-16, 18-21

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

18 February 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

25/02/1999

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/GB 98/03091

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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X	DE 27 05 652 A (BOEING CO) 3 May 1978 see claims 1, 6, 9 ---	1-4, 15, 16, 18, 19
X	FR 2 252 421 A (BEREDAY SIGMUND) 20 June 1975 see the whole document ---	1, 15
A	DE 195 48 740 A (ABB RESEARCH LTD) 26 June 1997 see the whole document -----	1, 2

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